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A&M'S 2009 FOOTBALL
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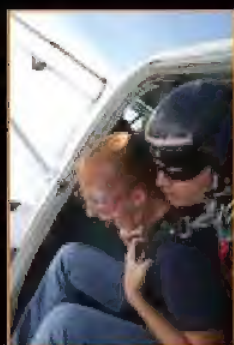
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Howdy!

Alright, it's confession time. We held our second annual *Aggieland Illustrated* Staff Bowl Pick 'em Contest and ran the predictions in our previous issue. The loser of said contest gets the pleasure of writing the editor's note in the next issue. For those of you keeping score, this year's results ended in a tie between our fearless leader, Brian, and my beautiful bride, Stacey. Unfortunately, Mrs. Ksionda lost the tiebreaker (total points in the National Championship game) and spared Brian his usual task of writing this note.

By now I'm sure many of you scholarly subscribers have picked up on the fact that Stacey isn't writing this note, and are eagerly anticipating an explanation. I'd like to tell you that I've taken the chivalrous road and volunteered to lift the burden from my bride's shoulders. Sadly, that isn't the truth. The fact is Stacey didn't even make her own picks. The Aggies weren't in a bowl this year, and she didn't give one iota about any of the other bowls being played. So, always seizing an opportunity when I see it, I thought I'd up my chances of "winning" this year's contest by submitting two entries, Stacey's and my own.

Obviously, that plan backfired. What's worse is that I was one loss away in my own "real" picks from finishing in a three-way tie for last. Thankfully, the Gators took care of the Sooners in the BCS Championship Game, preventing such a travesty from occurring.

Initially my plan was to tell you that our dog, Lucy (pictured above), actually made Stacey's picks and I was writing the letter on her behalf. But since our local newspaper sports editor has already cornered the market on blaming dogs for his picks, I thought it best to just admit my own defeat. So there you have it – my confession. The "football guy" on staff couldn't put his money where his mouth is and now you all have to suffer through reading my drivel.

But as long as I've got the stage, I want to seize another opportunity and thank you for being a part of our magazine. Whether you're a reader, subscriber, advertiser, staff member, or family member, you allow us to do what we love best – follow Aggie sports and share them with others. It's a privilege to follow the student athletes who choose to represent our great university through athletics, and we consider it an honor to share their stories with each of you.

So from all of us at *Aggieland Illustrated*, to all of you: Thank you. Here's to great memories for years to come, and a few more championship seasons along the way.

And in case you were wondering, Brian's wife, Kim, won this year's contest, and will likely never let him forget it.

God Bless, and Gig'em Aggies!

Jeremy Ksionda

P.S. Check out our new Maroon Market feature on page 17! If you are interested in advertising your Aggie product, call Rob at (979) 229-8046.

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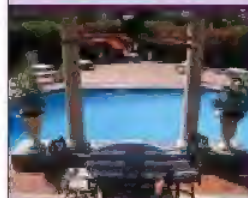
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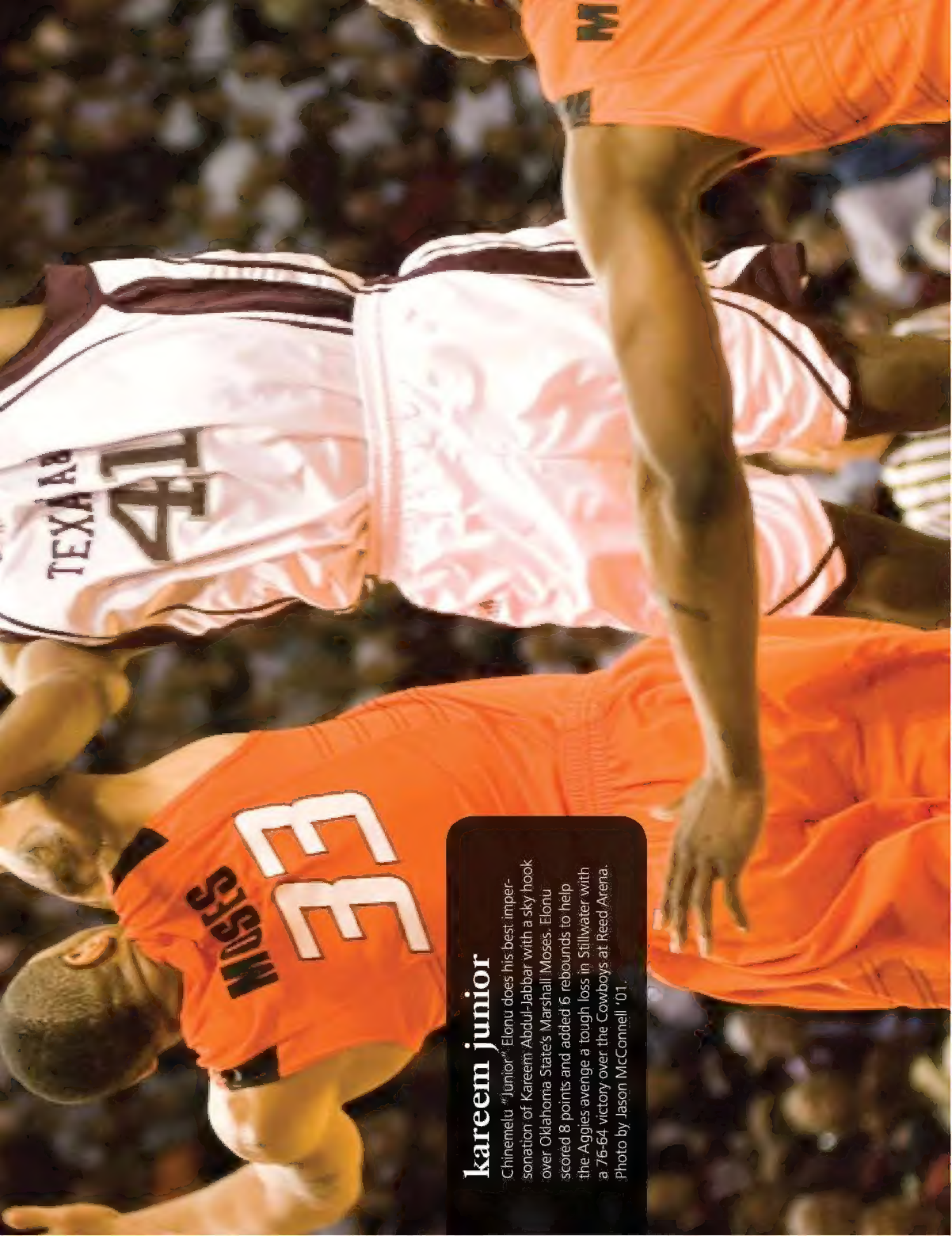
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kareem junior

Chinemelu "Junior" Elonu does his best impersonation of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with a sky hook over Oklahoma State's Marshall Moses. Elonu scored 8 points and added 6 rebounds to help the Aggies avenge a tough loss in Stillwater with a 76-64 victory over the Cowboys at Reed Arena.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



snapshot

home sweet home

Texas A&M freshman Kaleb Shrader competes in the pole vault event during the first-ever meet at the Gilliam Indoor Track and Field Stadium in College Station. The Aggies christened the new facility with a pair of dual meet victories in front of 3,016 raucous fans.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



rock chalk

Freshman Tyre White splits two defenders for an acrobatic shot attempt during a home game against Kansas. White contributed 9 points as the Aggies fought back from a tough first half to defeat the Jayhawks, 73-60.

Photo by Jason McConnell '07









dive in

Aggie sophomore Leek Patrick begins her dive in front of a near-capacity crowd at the Student Rec Center Natatorium during a meet against Texas. The new comer from Australia had a great finish in the dual meet season, claiming the A&M school record in both springboard diving events. Photo by Jason McConnell '08



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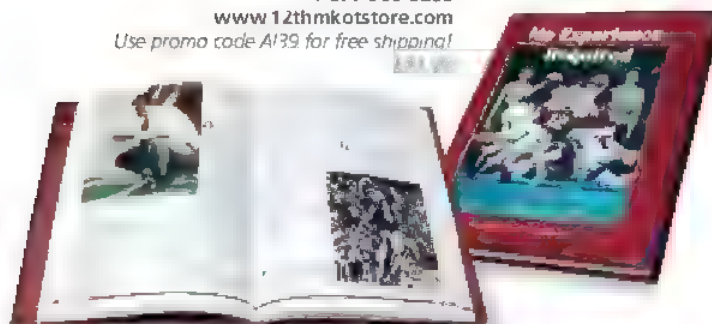
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a. 1
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4

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c. \$267,000
d. \$359,000

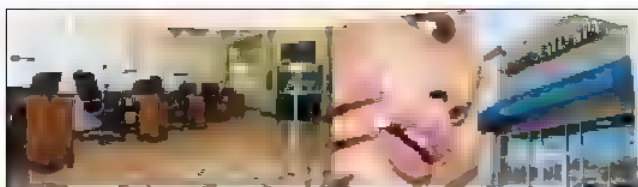
3. Jarrin' John Kimbrough originally played for which school, where he was cut from the roster?

a. Texas
b. Tulane
c. LSU
d. Houston

4. Who holds the school record for most rushing yards in a single game, with 297 against SMU?

a. Bob Smith in 1964
b. Gus Dickey in 1978
c. Darren Lewis in 1990
d. Leonard McElroy in 1993

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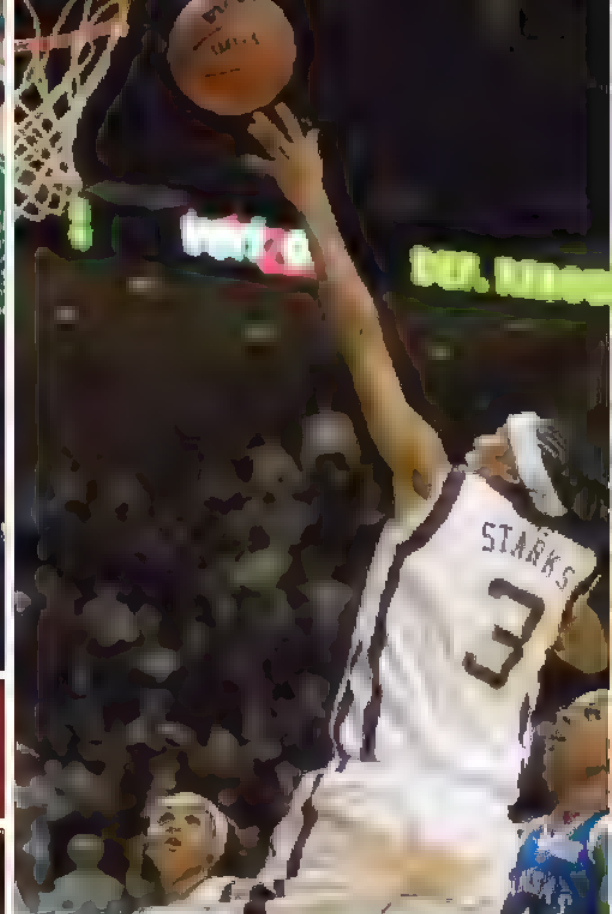
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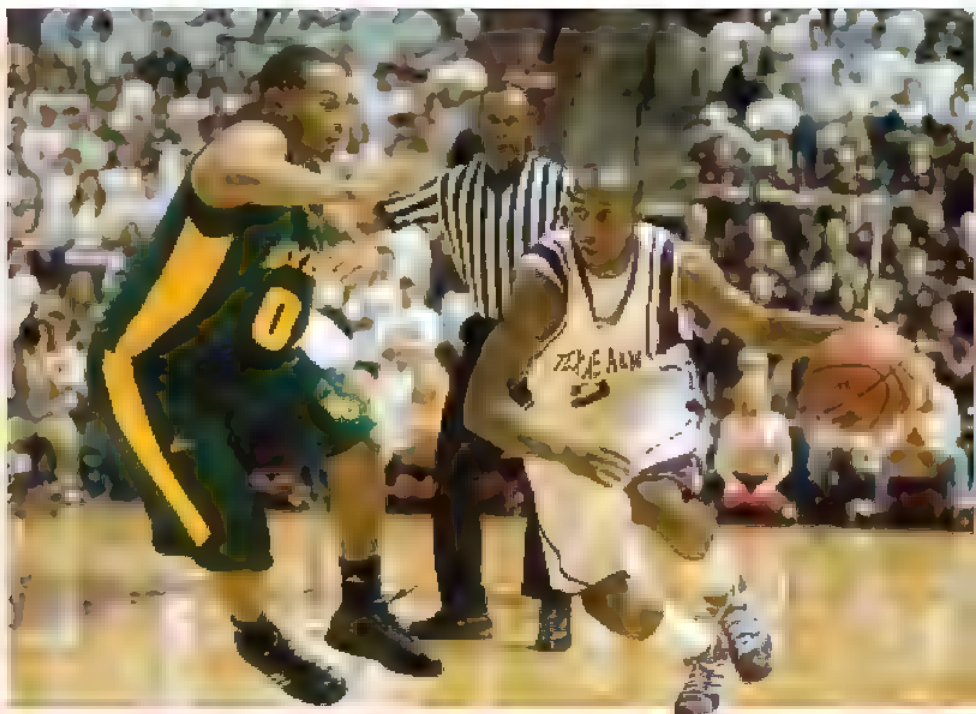
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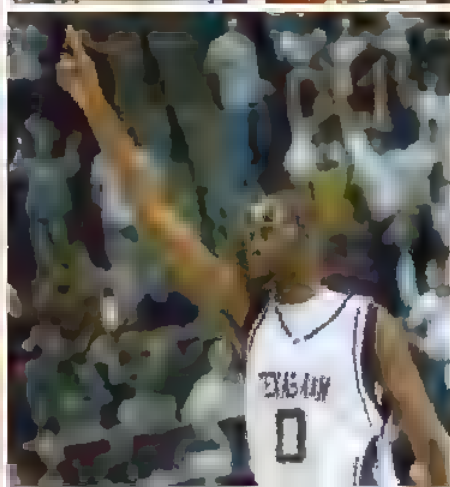


Just past the midpoint of the conference schedule, the Aggies have recorded some big wins as well as some tough losses. Surprisingly, the biggest wins have come on the road against Missouri, Oklahoma State and Texas. The team's only home loss came in a back and forth contest against rival Baylor. With huge home rematches against the Longhorns, Sooners and Cowboys still on the horizon, the success of the season is still to be determined.





With the regular season winding down, the Texas A&M men's basketball team finds themselves in a battle to save their postseason hopes and dreams. The good news is that their most difficult conference games are behind them. The bad news is that they likely need to win the rest to secure an invitation to the NCAA tournament. Without a great finish — either in conference play or a tournament championship run — the Ags are looking at ending their streak of consecutive trips to the dance at three. That will undoubtedly provide plenty of motivation down the stretch for the team to pull together and try to find a way to get it done.





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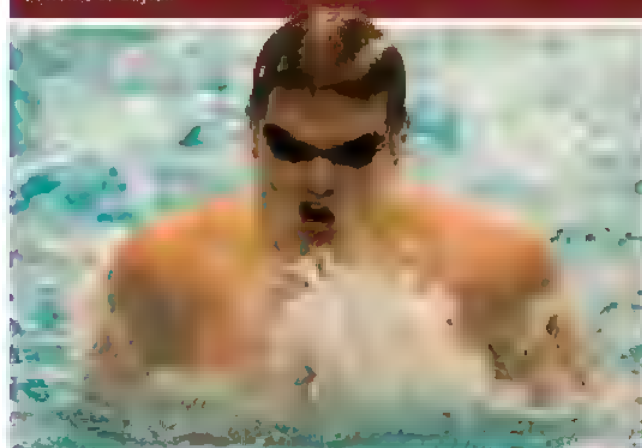
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(tennis) Both the men's and women's tennis seasons are off and running with each team starting well at 2-1. (swimming) The men's and women's swimming and diving teams have their eyes on the upcoming Big 12 championships as well as the NCAA championships which will be in College Station this year. (track and field) Coach Pat Henry's group continues to impress as the women are ranked No. 3 in the nation and the men are No. 4. (equestrian) The Texas A&M equestrian team is ranked No. 4 in the nation after dropping a 197-16 decision at South Carolina and a 21-10 contest at home to Baylor.



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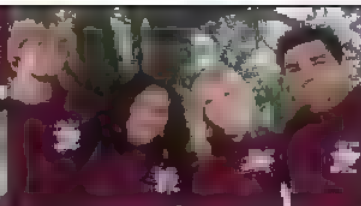
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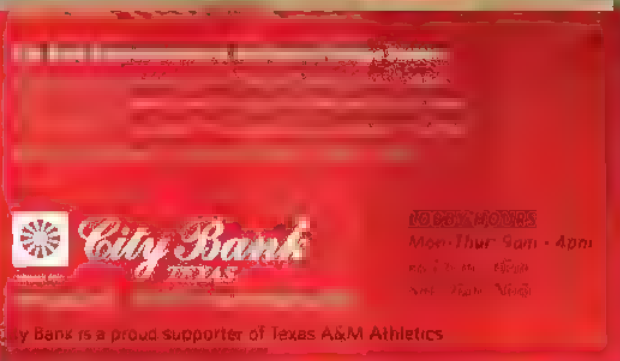
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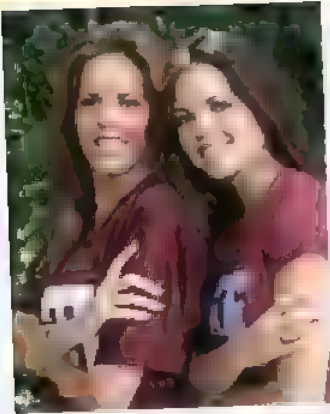
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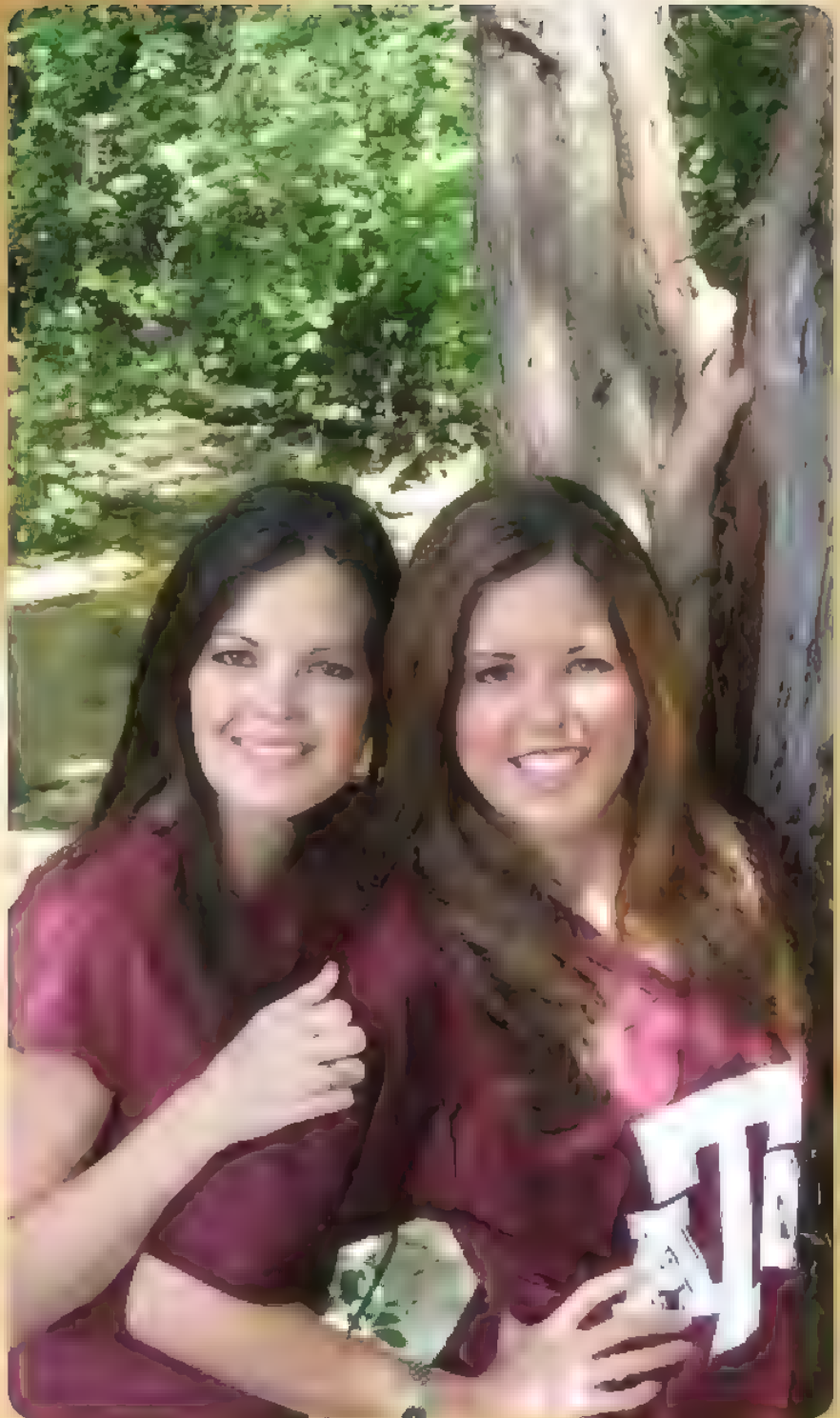

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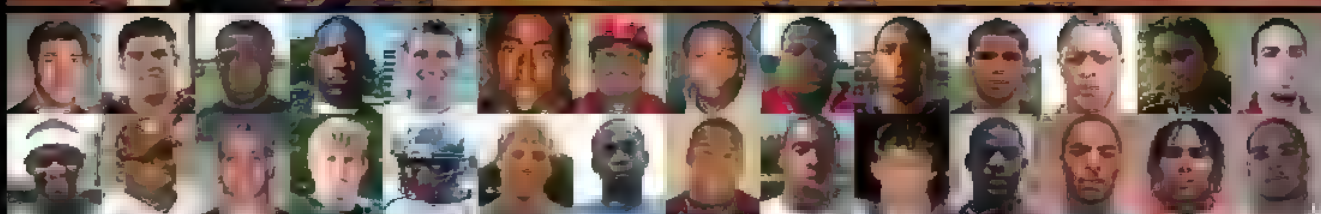


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Mike Sherman and staff build their first full recruiting class with character and speed

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

On February 4, Mike Sherman closed the book on his first complete recruiting class as Texas A&M head coach. In his signing day press conference, Sherman indicated that speed and character were essential ingredients when evaluating prospects. While character can be intangible, in that it can be built and measured over the course of a lifetime, speed is more concrete. In the words of A&M defensive coordinator Joe Kines, speed is something you can't coach. You either have it or you're chasing it. If Sherman and his coaches' evaluations were correct, this class shouldn't be doing very much chasing. Though running back Christine Michael is the most highly decorated member of the group, this class is "headlined" by an astonishing number of linebackers (5) and defensive backs (7) that will be called upon early to bring some much needed speed to the Aggie defense.

**aaronARTERBURN lb**

Rockwall High School (Rockwall, TX)

HT 6-2 WT: 215

Shows great range both against the run and in pass coverage. Changes direction smoothly for a big defender and can pursue laterally. Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech, Purdue, TCU and Northwestern. Coached by Scott Smith at Rockwall High School.

High School:

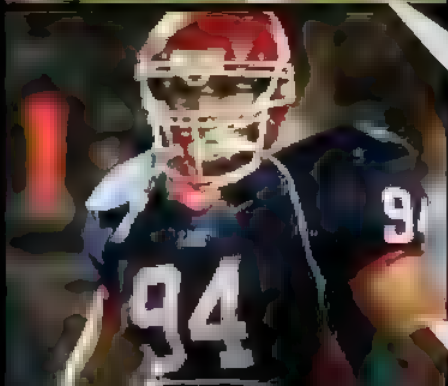
Earned first team All-District 10-4A honors as both an outside linebacker and tight end. Notched 100-plus tackles, five sacks and returned an interception for a score as a senior.

Personal:

Aaron is the son of Tony and Laurie Arterburn. Born August 22, 1990.

"I think A&M will get great things from Aaron. He's fast, smart, and tough, and he makes plays off the edge in pass rushing situations."

—ROCKWALL COACH SCOTT SMITH

**stephenBARRERA ol**

Clearlake High School (Clear Lake, TX)

HT 6-5 WT: 290

Versatile lineman is talented enough to play on the offensive or defensive front. Explosive blocker gets off the line quickly and shows his hands to establish leverage. Chose the Aggies over Nebraska, TCU and Houston. Coached by Troy Aduddell at Clear Lake High School.

High School:

Earned All-District 24-5A honors as both a junior and senior at Clear Lake. As a junior notched 51 tackles, including three TFLs, two sacks and batted down three passes. Maroon & White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Stephen Barrera is the son of Robert Barrera and Bernadette Bennett. Born September 26, 1990.

**stevenCAMPBELL db**

Jersey Village High School (Houston, TX)

HT 6-0 WT: 178

Free-footed safety, plays downhill and can wreak havoc on backs and receivers. Physical defender runs through the backfield when making a tackle. Chose the Aggies over California, Nebraska, Kansas and Arizona. Coached by David Sokholis at Jersey Village High School.

High School:

Tallied 76 stops and intercepted a pair of passes as a senior. Earned All-District 15-5A honors as both a junior and senior.

Personal:

Steven is the son of Steven Campbell Sr. and Evelyn Taylor. Born May 29, 1991.

"I think Steven is going to surprise a lot of people. We like his aggressiveness — he's very physical and loves to hit."

—A&M COACH BUDDY WYATT



kirbyENNIS *de*

Huntsville High School (Huntsville, TX)

HT 6-4 WT 233

Projects to play defense end but could potentially play on the interior defensive line as well. Chose the Aggies over Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma State, and Colorado. Coached by Mitchell Coey at Huntsville High School.

High School:

Earned honorable mention All-State honors from the Associated Press. Voted District 18-4A Defensive MVP as a senior after registering 56 tackles and six sacks. Career 277 tackles, 20 tackles for loss, 10 sacks, intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble.

Personal:

Kirby is the son of Dennis Ennis & Gailson of Mary O. Bryant. Born September 4, 1990.



ryanEPPERSON *p*

Keiser High School (Keiser, TX)

HT 6-2 WT 180

Talented punter possesses a very strong leg. Good hang time on punts allows great kick coverage. Chose Aggies over Air Force. Coached by Kevin Atkinson at Keiser High School.

High School:

Earned All-District honors as a senior. Averaged over 43 yards per punt.

Personal:

Ryan is the son of Jeff and Laura Epperson.

"Ryan is a soccer player. He's a good athlete, and I want our punters to be good athletes. Those guys have to maneuver around, keep their composure, and may have to make a tackle."

—A&M HEAD COACH
MIKE SHERMAN



desmondGARDINER *db*

Port Arthur Memorial High School (Port Arthur, TX)

HT 5-10 WT 175

Polished cover man, is exceptional both in and out of coverage. Excellent speed allows him to cover big chunks of the secondary. Chose the Aggies over Missouri, Nebraska, Arizona State, and TCU. Coached by Ronnie Thompson at Port Arthur Memorial High School.

High School:

Earned first-team All-District (21-5A) honors as both a junior and senior. As a senior, recorded 60 tackles and broke up 14 passes.

Personal:

Desmond is the son of John Gardiner and Charlene Davison. Born September 19, 1991.





kalvin GUYTON rb

Houston Lamar High School (Houston, TX)

HT: 5-10 WT: 190

Can be either running the ball or catching passes out of the backfield. Consistently runs downhill and can wear down a defense. Chose the Aggies over Nebraska, Minnesota, Kentucky, and Ohio State. Coached by Tom Nola at Lamar High School.

High School:

As a senior ran for 745 yards and 13 touchdowns. Earned District 20 5A Offensive MVP honors as a junior. Rushed for 911 yards on only 78 carries. 11 faves, scoring 15 touchdowns.

Personal:

Kalvin is the son of Calvin Guyton Sr. and Sandra Jackson. Born June 11, 1991.



dustin HARRIS db

Livingston High School (Houston, TX)

HT: 6-0 WT: 160

Earned a scholarship offer after impressing coaches at an A&M summer camp. Smooth stride and explosive burst give him excellent closing speed. Chose the Aggies over Utah. Coached by Randy Rowe at Livingston High School.

High School:

As a senior earned 20-4A District MVP honors. Named second-team All-State by the Associated Press. Intercepted 8 passes and returned 1 for touchdowns.

Personal:

Dustin is the son of Ronald and Linda Harris. Born January 1, 1991.

"We moved Dustin from quarterback and wide receiver to corner on the last day of camp. He picked up every drill and showed great hips, feet and ball skills."

—A&M COACH CHARLES McMillian



chris HENDERSON dt

Dallas Carter High School (Dallas, TX)

HT: 6-1 WT: 280

Could see action at defensive end or defensive tackle. Chose the Aggies over Oklahoma and Miami. Coached by Allen Iverson at Dallas Carter High School.

High School:

Was invited to Hawaii to play in the Man and Bow high school all-star game. As a senior recorded 70 tackles, including 20 for loss and nine sacks. Maroon and White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Chris is the son of Catrina Henderson. Born January 15, 1990.

"Chris is what we needed — a big kid who is active and can make plays."

—A&M COACH BUDDY WYATT



brandal JACKSON wr

Navasota High School (Navasota, TX)

HT: 6-1 WT: 180

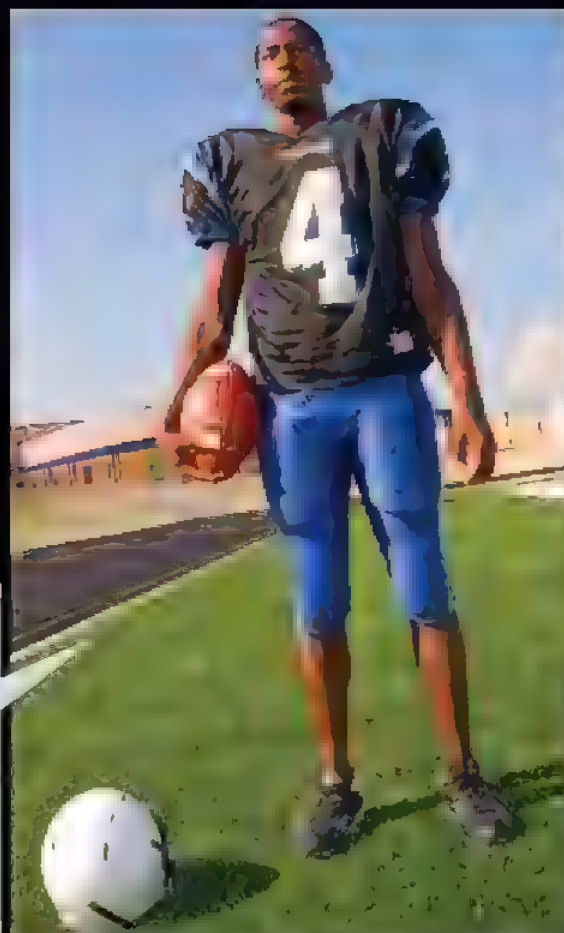
Explosive athlete has excellent speed, reliable hands and great blocking ability. Chose the Aggies over Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Southern Miss and Nebraska. Coached by former Aggie basketball letterman Lee Fedora at Navasota High School.

High School:

Earned first-team All-State honors as a wide receiver as a senior. As a senior caught 19 passes for 1,064 yards, 27.3 avg. and 15 touchdowns. Maroon and White Report Texas Top 15.

Personal:

Brandal is the son of Brandal Jackson Sr. Born March 28, 1991.





malcolmJOHNSON lb

Klein Collins High School (Klein, TX)
HT: 6-2 WT: 211

Started his high school career as a ball-hawking safety but grew into a linebacker. Tremendous athlete also returned kicks for the Tigers. Chose the Aggies over Rice and Baylor. Coached by Drew Svoboda at Klein Collins High School.

High School:

As a senior recorded 50 tackles, 11 sacks and broke up three passes. Earned first team All-District 13 5A accolades as a senior. Clocks a 10:49 in the 100 meters at the District 16-5A Track Meet as a junior.

Personal:

Malcolm is the son of Michael Johnson and Kathleen Murphy. Born December 19, 1990.

"We were looking to add more speed at linebacker and Malcolm does just that. More than anything else, he can cover a lot of ground and make plays in space."

—A&M COACH BUDDY WYATT



coryellJUDIE db

Marlin High School (Marlin, TX), Fort Scott CC (JR)
HT: 5-11 WT: 185

Tremendous athlete has the speed and athleticism to be a true lockdown corner. Explosive playmaker. Is also a threat to score any time he touches the ball on a return. Was named a national top 10 junior college recruit by SuperPrep.

Junior College:

In 2008 was named a Junior College All-American.

As a freshman notched 14 tackles, intercepted six passes and broke up seven more. As a sophomore recorded 49 tackles, intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble.

Personal:

Coryell is the son of Pam Thomas. Born October 14, 1987.



patrickLEWIS ol

East St. John's High School (LaPlace, LA)
HT: 6-2 WT: 293

Explosive and powerful blocker and over-the-top defensive lineman. Very aggressive at the point of attack. Chose the Aggies over Southern Miss, Tulsa and Connecticut.

High School:

First Team All-State OLSA and Sports Writers Association.

Rated the No. 4 center in the country by Varsity.

Rated the No. 2 strongest offensive line in the class of 2009 by Varsity. Named a Louisiana Top 15 recruit by SuperPrep.

Personal:

Patrick is the son of Patricia and Derride Lewis. Born January 10, 1991.



michaelLAMOTHE lb

New Iberia High School (New Iberia, LA)
HT: 6-3 WT: 215

Versatile playmaker has lined up at linebacker, safety, quarterback and tight end. Chose the Aggies over Arkansas, Southern Miss and Tulane. Coached by Rick Hutson at New Iberia High School in Louisiana.

High School:

Two-time All-District selection.

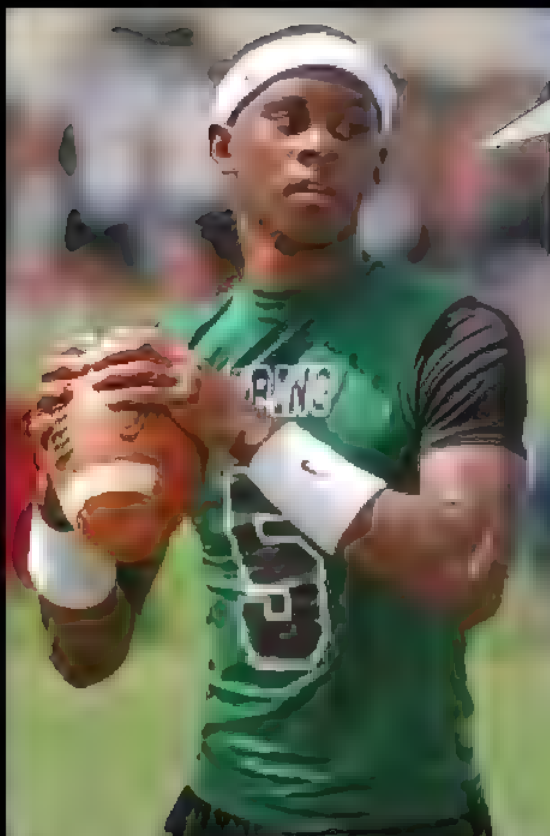
As a senior recorded 105 tackles, four sacks and intercepted four passes.

Personal:

Michael is the son of David and Janie Lamothe. Born January 1, 1991.

"Michael is a class act and we have really enjoyed having him. He's a great athlete with a really good work ethic."

—NEW IBERIA COACH RICK HUTSON



kenricMCNEAL wr
Spring High School (Spring, TX)
HT 6'1 WT 175

Recruited as an athlete, McNeal has the physical skills to be a standout receiver. Chose the Aggies over Missouri, Notre Dame, the Missis, Nebraska and Oregon. Coached by Sonny Keadles at Spring High School.

High School:

As a junior, threw for 1,414 yards, nine touchdowns and ran for 11 yards. Five scores. Earned first-team All-District, 1st SA quarterback honors.

Personal:

Kenric is the son of Ken and Arlene McNeal, born July 8, 1971.



christineMICHAEL rb
Beaumont West Brook High School (Beaumont, TX)
HT 5'11 WT 202

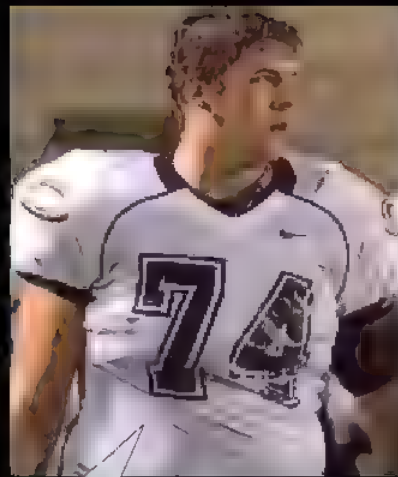
Game-changing running back has the ability to completely dominate a game. Possesses an excellent blend of size, speed and power. Chose the Aggies over Oklahoma, Florida State, Nebraska and Miami. Coached by former Aggie great Craig Simpson at Beaumont West Brook High School.

High School:

Honorable Mention All-State RB, 5A AP. A three-time All-District selection and two-time District 21 5A MVP. Was a starter and captain at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl. Maroon and White Report Texas Top 35. As a senior, ran for 1,412 yards and 25 touchdowns despite season being cut short by Hurricane Ike. As a junior, ran for 1,171 yards and 28 touchdowns. Also caught four touchdowns, passes.

Personal:

Christine is the son of Andrew Michael and Mary Giber, born November 19, 1990. Name is pronounced "Christiar".



clintNARON ol
Klein Oak High School (Klein, TX)
HT 6'6 WT 290

Physically offensive lineman gets into blocks quickly. Was just named both a lin blocker and pass protector in high school. Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech. Coached by David Smith at Klein Oak High School.

High School:

Honorable Mention All-State OL, 5A AP. First-team All-District, 1st 5A. Maroon and White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Clint is the son of Phil and Barbara Naron, born April 11, 1999.



spencerNEALY de

San Antonio Reagan High School (San Antonio, TX)

HT: 6-5 WT: 250

Versatile defender has the potential to play any position on the defensive front. Sure tackler plays with a high motor and gets off blocks quickly. Chose the Aggies over TCU and Kansas State.

Coached by David Wetzel at San Antonio Reagan HS.

High School:

Named San Antonio Area Defensive Player of the Year by the SA Express News. As a senior recorded 72 tackles, nine sacks and 49 QB hurries. Led San Antonio Reagan to the state quarterfinals.

Personal:

Spencer is the son of Edward DeAnthony Nealy, born December 8, 1990. Father Ed, played 10 seasons in the NBA.

"Nealy has a bubbling personality. I don't know if he's ever had a bad day. He plays with passion, which is a must at the defensive end position."

—A&M COACH BUDDY WYATT



uzomaNWACHUKWU WR

Arlington High School (Arlington, TX)

HT: 6-0 WT: 186

Has good speed and runs excellent routes.

Physically never has no problem going over the middle and a catch ball in traffic. Chose the Aggies over Oklahoma, Missouri, Notre Dame, Nebraska and Louisiana. Coached by Tom Westerberg at Arlington High School.

High School:

Received the Allen County 2008 5A Division 1 State Championship. As a senior caught 40 passes for 337 yards and four touchdowns. Rushed 11 times for 110 yards and two touchdowns. Marshall and White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Uzoma is the son of Ngaz Nwachukwu, born December 15, 1990. Name is pronounced Ew-ZOME uh WACH-uh-kuh. Nickname is "Easy."



hutsonPRIOLEAU te

All Saints Episcopal High School (Fort Worth, TX)

HT: 6-4 WT: 243

Versatile tight end excels at both run blocking and catching the football. Tall frame and good hands make him a threat in short yardage situations. Chose the Aggies over California and Houston.

Coached by Aaron Beck at All Saints Episcopal High School in Fort Worth.

High School:

Fort Worth Star Telegram Super Team, Private School's First Team. As a senior caught 36 passes for 751 yards and 11 touchdowns. Two-way player also contributed 59 tackles and eight sacks. Marshall and White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Hutson is the son of Frost and Martha Prioleau, born November 11, 1990.

"Prioleau is obviously the type of tight end that you look for. He's athletic and versatile and can run and block."

—A&M COACH KIRK DOLL



seanPORTER lb

Schertz Clemens High School (Schertz, TX)

HT: 6-2 WT: 205

Formerly a linebacker, is good against both the run and in pass coverage. Both as a player and as a coach has tremendous upside as a defender. Chose the Aggies over Missouri and Houston.

Coached by Greg Ferrara at Schertz Clemens High School.

High School:

Earned first team All-District (26-4A) honors as a linebacker. As a senior had 112 tackles and seven sacks. Marshall and White Report Texas Top 35.

Personal:

Sean is the son of LeRoy and Natalie Porter, born January 12, 1991.



rhontaeSCALES ol
Killeen High School (Killeen, TX)
HT: 6-6 WT: 299

Talented lineman could see time immediately on the Aggies' offensive front.
Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech and Oklahoma State.
Coached by Sam Jones at Killeen High School.

High School:

Carried first team All-State honors from the Associated Press.
Earned first team All-District honors as both a junior and senior.
Recorded 65 pancake blocks and 55 knockdowns as a senior.
Maroon and White Report Texas Top 15.

Personal:

Rhontae is the son of Lorenzo and Chanta Scales. Born November 14, 1990.

"When Rhontae was here for junior day, we watched his tape and I told him some of the things he needed to work on. That might have been a little risky at the time, but he appreciated that, which in turn allowed us to have a relationship."

—A&M HEAD COACH MIKE SHERMAN



jonathanSTEWART lb
Shreveport Byrd High School (Shreveport, LA)
HT: 6-4 WT: 221

Physical linebacker makes lots of plays at or behind the line of scrimmage.
Plays sideline to sideline and covers a ton of ground.
Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech, Alabama, Tennessee, Notre Dame, Cal and Michigan.
Coached by Mike Suggs at Shreveport Byrd High School in Louisiana.

High School:

Honorable Mention 5A All-State LB (Louisiana Sports Writers Association).
As a junior logged 115 tackles, 10 TFLs and three sacks.

Personal:

Jonathan is the son of James and Heier Stewart. Born November 23, 1990.

"Jonathan is an excellent player. He made so many great plays for us. He's a great student of the game as well."

—SHREVEPORT BYRD COACH MIKE SUGGS



ryanSWOPE wr
Austin Westlake High School (Austin, TX)
HT: 6-0 WT: 195

Explosive playmaker is a threat to score anytime he touches the football.
Recruited as an athlete but was the potential to play several positions for the Aggies.
Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech.
Played to Derek Long at Austin Westlake High School.

High School:

Earned All-State honors as a running back by both the AP and TS/WA as a senior.
Named the 25 5A Offensive MVP.
As a senior ran for 1,826 yards and 27 touchdowns.
Had 21 catches for 443 yards and four touchdowns.
Maroon and White Report Texas Top 15.

Personal:

Ryan is the son of Paul and Louise Swope. Born September 20, 1990.



charlie **THOMAS** db

Beaumont Central High School (Beaumont, TX)

HT: 6-1 WT: 194

Has tremendous speed and will excel in both man and zone coverages

Chose the Aggies over LSU, Oklahoma State and Oregon

Coached by Donald Stowers at Beaumont Central High School

High School:

Earned first team All District 22-4A, honors as an outside linebacker

Led Beaumont Central to the state quarterfinals with a 9-4 record

Track standout ran in three events at the 4A State Track Meet as a junior

Personal:

Born November 15, 1990

"Charlie is a very explosive, physical defensive player and has a lot of upside. I'm excited to see him grow and progress in college."

—BEAUMONT COACH DONALD STOWERS



steven **TERRELL** db

Allen High School (Allen, TX)

HT: 5-10 WT: 176

Could play safety, or corner for the Aggies

Physical defensive player excels in coverage and support and sacks a team's

Chose the Aggies over Wisconsin, Arizona State, Texas Tech and Louisville

Coached by Tom Aesterberg at Allen High School

High School:

Helped lead Allen to the 2008 5A Division 1 State Championship

Named first team All State by the TSSAA

As a senior, had 122 tackles, five blocked kicks and two interceptions

Personal:

Steven is the son of Darlene and Connie Terrell, born September 21, 1990



colton **VALENCIA** db

Hightower High School (Missouri City, TX)

HT: 5-10 WT: 176

Has the skills to be a lock down corner and the strength to play safety

Shows great instinct and awareness in breaking up passes

Chose the Aggies over Nebraska, Oklahoma State, Arizona State and Oregon

Coached by Shane Ramirez at Missouri City Hightower High School

High School:

Named to the All PC All Greater Houston Team

Led Hightower to the 5A Division 1 state championship game with a 13-1 record

Earned first team All District 22-5A, honors as both a junior and senior

As a senior, logged 40 tackles, intercepted three passes and broke up six more

Personal:

Colton is the son of Pamela and Jose, born July 4, 1991



andrew **WEAVER** de

Waco High School (Waco, TX)

HT: 6-2 WT: 215

Plays with a non stop motor and is a lethal pass rusher

Chose the Aggies over Texas Tech, Oklahoma State, Missouri and Purdue

Coached by Johnny Tusa at Waco High School

High School:

As a junior recorded 34 tackles, including 14 TFLs, six sacks and batted down four passes

As a senior notched 48 tackles, including 8 TFLs, six sacks and recovered two fumbles

Earned first team All District 16-4A, honors at defensive end as both a junior and senior

Personal:

Andrew is the son of Larry and Patricia Weaver, born January 10, 1991

"Andrew has a good burst off the edge. His biggest strength is going after the quarterback. He's a very aggressive player who chases the ball well."

—WACO COACH JOHNNY TUSA



THE ROAD TO Omaha

The Aggie baseball team takes high expectations in stride as they begin the 2009 season BY SCOTT CLENDENIN '89

When Rob Childress flew straight to Texas A&M from the College World Series to accept the head coaching job, going back to Omaha and playing for the national championship were on his mind. He knew who he wanted to hire as assistant coaches, he knew where he wanted to recruit, and he knew the type of ball player he wanted to coach. The plan was in place when he sat down in his new office on the first day, and his burning desire to return has not diminished since that day.

The Aggies return what many consider the deepest pitching staff in the country as well as several key players who bypassed the opportunity to start their professional baseball careers after last season. Combined with a top recruiting class, Childress and his staff have the program ready to reach the next level.

"I think we have a good enough nucleus that understands what you have to go through to put yourself in a position to go to Omaha," Childress said. "We understand that we haven't done that each of the last two years. We have worked very hard and gotten very close to be in that position, but we haven't done enough to deserve a top eight national seed."

The disappointment of losing two straight super regional matchups at Rice — by a combined seven runs in those four games — has the coaches and players focused on taking the next step in 2009. Last year the Aggies went 46-19 overall, winning the Big 12 title with a 19-8 record while setting a conference record with 16 consecutive league victories along the way. A&M is one of the favorites for another Big 12 championship in 2009, but the league is loaded with as many as five other teams that will begin the season ranked among the best in the country.

"We want the bull's-eye on our back and every team's best shot," Childress said. "I think every team in the country would embrace that. Our players have worked very hard to get ready for this year and even though it was a six week break between semesters, over half our team was back right in town right after

Christmas to work on their own."

The Aggie recruiting class was ranked as high as sixth in the nation this year, and it brought in talented pitchers and hitters to fill the spots of departing All-Big 12 players Darby Brown, Dane Carter, Jose Duran, Brian Ruggiano and Blake Stouffer. Filling those holes will be the key to the season.

"There has been a lot of investment in the team from the coaches all the way through our staff down to the players," Childress said. "Our players understand what our goals are first and foremost — win 45 games in the regular season, be on top of the Big 12 and finish the season strong."

Texas A&M enters the season ranked No. 1 in the nation by Baseball America joining the 1989, 1993 and 1999 Aggie teams that have enjoyed such lofty rankings. However, this is the first time the honor came before a single game was played. This year's club will try to emulate each of those great Aggie teams. They all won more than 50 games, with the two more recent teams ending their seasons in Omaha.

On the mound, the Aggies return the pitchers who were responsible for all but five of the team's victories in 2008. **Brooks Raley** (7-2, 4.76 ERA, 68 K) was the first freshman to start on Friday nights for the Aggies since Casey Fossum in 1997, while fellow freshman **Barret Loux** (6-2, 4.18 ERA, 81 K) was the Saturday starter. **Clayton Ehlert** is often overlooked as the Sunday starter, but he posted the best numbers of the group last season (6-2, 3.41 ERA, 48 K) and had a terrific fall camp.

"The great thing about the 13-week schedule is that pitchers will get opportunities early," Childress said. "We may find out something about a player that we don't even know. That happened last year with players pitching on Tuesdays and Wednesdays who might not have had the chance if we were still on the 16-week schedule."

The return of All-Big 12 reliever **Travis Starling** (8-2, 3.70 ERA, 9 saves) and **Kyle Thebeau** (6-5, 2.12 ERA, 3 saves) anchors the end of a bullpen that looks to be even better in 2009. **Shane Minks** (4-1, 3.27 ERA) has climbed the draft boards after a terrific summer, and **Hank Robertson** (1-0, 3.75 ERA, 1 save) has recovered from an arm injury that ended his season last May.

Former Freshman All-American **Scott Migl** (3-3, 4.26 ERA) gives the coaches an experienced player for multiple roles on the mound. **Steve Martin** redshirted last year but has high velocity and is imposing on the mound. Watch for **Nick Fleece** — one of the surprises of fall practice — to get a chance on the mound when not in the lineup.

All eyes — and radar guns — were trained on 2006 national freshman of the year **Alex Wilson** this summer at the Cape as he recovered from 2007 "Tommy John" surgery. Without throwing a single pitch last season, the Chicago Cubs drafted him in the eleventh round. The hard-throwing right-hander improved as the fall progressed, and some scouts think he could go in the first round this year. Trying to bump one of the returning starters out of a weekend job will be tough, but Wilson will still start 10-15 games this year.

Chad Sherman started for two seasons at Panola JC and had a great fall, impressing Childress with control and great off-speed pitches. Two hard-throwing freshmen — **Ross Hales** and **Denny Clement** — also showed Childress pitching poise and ability. They will see plenty of action out of the bullpen this year and

have the coaches excited about their futures. **Tyler Dyer** and **Estevan Uriegas** will provide depth from the left hand side and **Ross Stripling** is a developing righty.

"These pitchers have to go out and prove it, compete on a daily basis and earn innings," Childress said. "Not everyone is going to be in the starting rotation. We will need great long relievers, set up guys and guys who can finish games. Everyone has to take on a role and be great at it. They need to make us pitch them."

Luke Anders (.349-16-58), turned down a chance to play for the New York Yankees after being drafted following last season. Hard work transformed the seldom used pitcher into a two-time All-Big 12 hitter, and he is poised for a huge senior season. Also returning is All-Big 12 outfielder **Kyle Colligan** (.317-15-39) providing a tremendous boost offensively and defensively. He looks to continue his leadoff role in 2009, setting the table for the offense. **Brodie Greene** (.290-4-27), who has started two years in the outfield will likely move into the infield and return to switch hitting for the first time in three years. **Kevin Gonzalez** (.261-3-29) is the top defensive catcher in the Big 12, and his offense continues to improve. The team's leading hitter during the fall, **Fleece** (.231-2-10) showed his power during the Big 12 tournament with a towering homerun off a parking garage over the left field wall. **Raley** (.259-0-9) played in the outfield when not pitching last year and could do the same in 2009. **Caleb Shofner** is a great utility player with a smooth hitting stroke. **David Alleman** is battling back from injuries but had a great fall as a switch-hitting outfielder. **Andrew Nettune** is another red-shirt possessing tremendous power, while providing important depth behind the plate.

"There is no question in my mind that we are going to be able to hit this season," Aggie hitting coach **Jeremy Talbot** said. "I

"We want the bull's-eye on our back and every team's best shot."

—COACH ROB CHILDRESS

am pretty confident that the fans will be really pleased with the offense they see on the field."

Nick Anders (.431-7-51 at Temple JC) – Luke's younger brother – and **Adam Smith** (.507-4-24 at Klein HS) have the unenviable task of replacing All-Big 12 starters at third and short-stop respectively. National junior college player of the year **Joe Patterson** (.428-28-95 at Seminole JC) will catch behind Gonzalez and see plenty of time at designated hitter this season to get his left-handed power in the lineup. **Dylan Petrich** (.403-3-59 at Butler JC) and **Brett Parsons** (.416-10-51 at Navarro JC) will battle for time in the outfield. **Randall Thorpe** is a blazing runner with a bright future in the Aggie outfield. **Scott Arthur** and **Zach Luther** are talented young infielders that will see limited action this season.

"There are going to be some new faces out there when you look at us losing the Big 12 player of the year in Duran along with Carter, Stouffer, Ruggiano and Brown," Childress said. "Those guys were in the lineup every day, but we don't get to write them in there anymore."

Fans may talk about going to the College World Series in hushed tones, building up the trip to the heartland as a mystical place, but not the Aggie coaches and players.

"If you can't talk about Omaha, you are never going to get there," he said. "It is something you need to talk about because if it becomes a taboo word – if you do get in that position – you will crumble. It is our ultimate goal. Not just to get there, but to stay there and have a shot to be the last team standing." ■



FIVE QUESTIONS FOR HITTING COACH JEREMY TALBOT

How rewarding has it been building this program back to the top of the rankings?

It has been very rewarding just considering where I was when we came in here and where we are now. The most rewarding part has been watching the players take ownership of the program and taking pride in how we prepare and play the game.

How frustrating has it been to just miss Omaha the past two seasons?

Hungry would be the best word to describe it. It is frustrating but it is very motivating. We have been close. You could taste it and you could see it – but hats off to the Aggies. They have had great teams and played great against us. This is the first time I can't take anything for granted. We have the ranking and the talent, that has been brought in, but this team still plays like a team that hasn't really done anything. They know there is more to be accomplished. Frustrating, yes, hungry, yes, but motivated is also a great word to describe how we feel.

How do you find time at the plate for your players with so much depth offensively?

Coach Childress says entering the season that you can never have too much pitching and you can never have enough good hitters. It always looks good at the beginning of the season, but they seem to work themselves in and out of the

lineup. We do feel like we can run out some different looks. We have lineups that can run lineups that can play defense and lineups that can hit for power as well as combinations. I can do them all.

What made you want to teach hitting?

For as long as I can remember I have had an inner passion for anything that had to do with swinging and hitting a ball. Whether it was golf, baseball or tennis, I was always enamored with the physical aspects of the movement. It is really interesting when you look at the mind and body connection of what guys are doing mentally at the plate and how it affects the physical things they do. It is really rewarding when you have a player make a change, feel something and then the "light bulb" goes off. That is why we coach. For that moment – and I think I have a lot of those moments as a hitting coach.

What is "Olsen Magic" to you?

It is an energy that these fans bring. It is a fun atmosphere. It is a great feeling. It is a feeling that you can't describe. The fans are into every pitch. It doesn't necessarily take someone hitting a double into the gap or a guy striking out the side with the bases loaded for them to be excited. They really enjoy the fans' enjoyment of baseball at Olsen Field. ■



unfinished **BUSINESS**

College baseball is a young player's game, and coaches and players understand that you maximize your draft position and signing bonuses by having a great junior season. Thus, having star seniors on the roster is rare, but when you do, they can take your team to the next level.

To illustrate the point, the 2009 Baseball America Top 100 College Prospect list has twice as many draft eligible sophomores as the six seniors that are listed. Coaches recruit with the knowledge and expectations that junior players will sign 90 percent of the time, so whenever you have a star senior come back,

it is a huge advantage for the program.

Three Aggie seniors decided to return for the 2009 season after turning down the opportunity to take the next step into professional baseball last year. Each came back with a clear goal—to advance their team into the College World Series. Luke Anders, Kyle Colligan and Kyle Thebeau all talked about this year being a chance to finish what they started and lead their team back to Omaha for the first time in a decade. The trio played key roles last season as the Aggies won their first Big 12 championship since 1999 and advanced to the super regionals for the second

straight year.

"I think it says a lot about our program and the family environment that we have here," head coach Rob Childress said about players forgoing professional baseball to return to Aggieland. "They know there is unfinished business here and they want another shot. They are also confident enough in their abilities to know that professional baseball is going to be there when they choose to go, not just when professional baseball chooses them. They wanted to have another shot to come back and play for each other and do something special here at Texas A&M."

Walking off the field at Reckling Park after losing to Rice was the last thing these players wanted to have happen, and while they all respect the program on South Main, they know that as three players who played on the first Childress-coached team that finished last in Big 12 play, their legacy would be complete with a trip to Omaha.

Anders was a lightly used left-handed pitcher with one at-bat his first season before transforming himself into the most feared hitter in the Big 12 with old-fashioned hard work. He was always the first player in the batting cages at Olsen Field and the last to leave, retooling his game into an offensive dynamo. When he hits the field with younger brother, Nick, the local products will become the first brother combination to start for A&M in known memory.

"Losing twice to Rice really had me searching my heart on what to do," Anders said. "We have great coaches and had great players coming in so I thought we had a chance to do something special this year. We just have to keep working hard at it."

The senior class also became the leaders of this team, starting last summer and carrying on during the fall scrimmage season.

"In order for us to go where we want to go, people have to stand up," Anders said. "The seniors needed to lead these young guys. If they get nervous or have questions they need to talk to the people that have been there before."

Colligan was in the middle of what looked to be a redshirt season in 2006. When injury and ineffectiveness left the coaches looking for a new centerfielder, Colligan came off the bench and homered in just his second game on the field. He fielded calls from pro teams until the 15th round of the draft last season before telling them not to bother taking him since he was committed to returning to Aggieland.

"A lot of players just tell the scouts what they want to hear so they will get drafted," Colligan said. "I negotiated with several teams, and when the money wasn't right I told them that they shouldn't waste the pick since I had a lot of school I could work on this year."

Colligan admits that coming up short on the team's goal also factored into his decision.

"Our goal was to win the National Championship the past two years," he said. "Not doing that played a factor in my draft status, and I knew that I wanted to come back and help this team win the national championship this season."

Thebeau was in the weekend starting rotation as true freshman, but he found his role as the ultimate swingman for Childress the last two seasons. He has been called on for long relief, closing a game, or stepping in as the starter with the season on the line. Aggie fans will never forget his regional clinching performance against Louisiana-Lafayette, striking out the last five batters he faced in the 5-2 victory. The thirteenth punchout came to the chant of his name echoing through Olsen Field.

"It is great to be back with Anders, Colligan and Travis Starling (a redshirt in 2006)," Thebeau said. "We were all on the last place team in the Big 12, and last year we were on the first place team in the Big 12. It has been a lot of fun being here four years with these guys and you couldn't ask for better players to be the leaders of this team."

The 1999 team that went to the College World Series saw John Scheschuk, Matt Ward and Erik Sobek all return and play key roles for the Aggies, much like the trio this season. Scheschuk was second on the team in hitting and was named All-Big 12 at first base. Sobek was also a key at the plate and played in the outfield. Ward was a weekend starter and was third on the team in victories. All three were better than ever as seniors.

"It is hard to describe, but that year was the most fun I ever had playing baseball," Scheschuk recalled about his senior season that earned him the Manon Pugh Most Valuable Player award. "The relationships we developed on that team and with people in the university in general were priceless. Coming back was an incredible experience and I am a big proponent of it."

One of the lasting memories of that year was Scheschuk holding the super regional championship trophy over his head in front of the joyous Aggie crowd.

"Losing to Mississippi State in the last game of the year in 1998 absolutely impacted my decision to come back to school," Scheschuk admits. "I got back and led my team to Omaha and had another chance to live out my life's dream on Olsen Field."

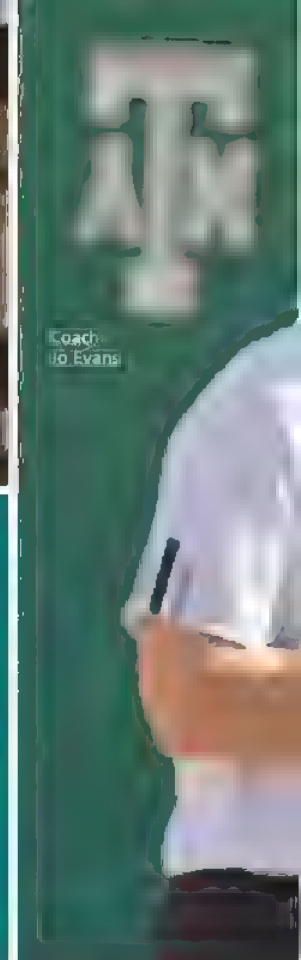
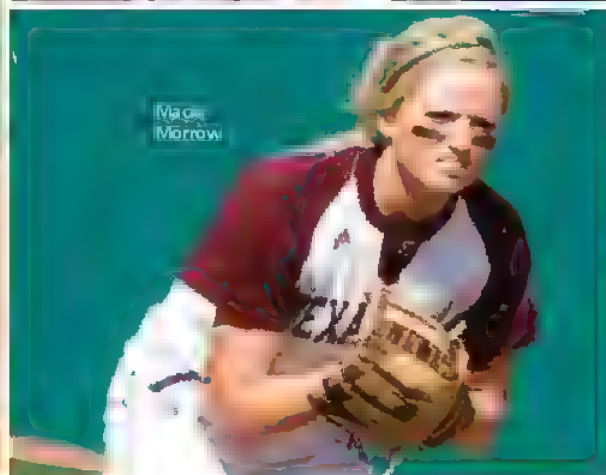
Anders, Colligan and Thebeau have the same opportunity to take a leadership role and return Texas A&M back to Omaha for the first time in 10 years.

"The difference makers this year are going to be those players who came back," Childress said. "It says a lot about what we are doing here, that they would want to come back." ■



"Seeing a group of guys coming back when they could have gone on to pro baseball says a lot about Texas A&M. It says a lot about the program and our coaches and what we want to do here."

—KYLE THEBEAU



Coach
Jo Evans

Macie
Morrow

changing of THE GUARD

Nine questions about the 2009 Texas A&M softball season for head coach Jo Evans

BY JEREMY KSONDA '04 AND BRIAN DAVIS '01

Last year's run was historic. How do you follow that?

It's tough especially when you lose some key players. The big thing for us is to understand that the possibilities are endless. I don't know many people who thought we would play for a national championship at the beginning of last year. Going in to this season, we have to understand that we have great potential. And we also have to let go of last year. This is a new team, new dynamic, new chemistry and new personnel. It's tempting to say we have the perfect formula to play for a national championship and just to follow everything we did last year, except now we have a completely different team. We can take the things that match up with this year's team but we have to let go of everything else. It can be tricky because it's really easy to live in the past and it's also a burden of 'how are we going to replicate that season?' We are really doing our best to let last year go, keep the excitement of the possibilities and to create our own team identity.

How do you replace your All-Americans and the leadership they provided on and off the field?

We can't replace them. We just have to move on with a different group

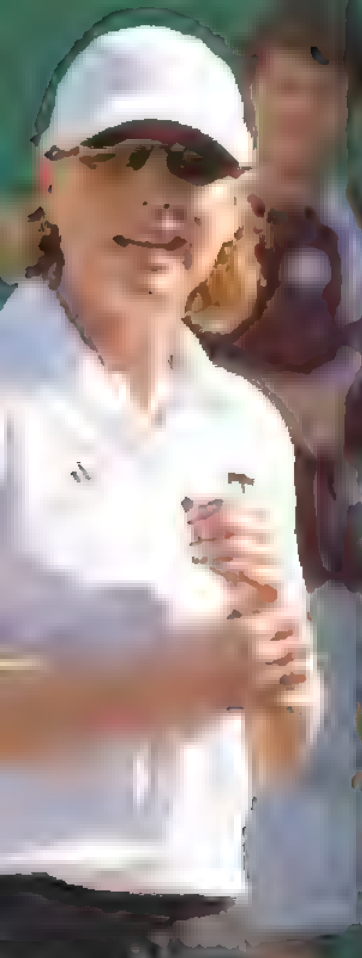
Holly Ridley and **Erin Glasco** are two of our three seniors. The other is a transfer from Boston College. Those two are really the core of our leadership. They've been voted team captains and are doing a fantastic job. They had to sort of let go of last year as well because they wanted everything to feel the same and it's not. They've had to be more patient and understand that they are now veterans playing on a young team.

What are the strengths of this year's team?

We are strong up the middle. Glasco, **Macie Morrow** and **Natalie Villarreal** did a great job last year. We led the nation in fielding percentage. **Rhi Kliesing** is going to be a strength for us. I think offensively, we are a very strong team. We can hit throughout our lineup. We have good power and speed. Offensively and defensively, we have a really nice balance. Pitching is going to be our quest on. We are very young on the mound. Kliesing picked up some significant wins for us last year, but she didn't get a lot of time out there. Then we have **Becca Arbino** who is a freshman and is untested. She is coming off of mono, so she just started throwing which adds a wrinkle to our challenges. **Savana Lloyd** is our transfer from Boston College and we expect her to be a reliever for us. I think our level of success is going to depend on if those young pitchers can learn in a hurry. Hopefully our talent on offense will allow us to score a lot of runs and we can take some pressure off the young pitchers.

Who are some of the new faces on the team this year?

We have a freshman that's going to be starting in center field this season. **Kelsea Orsak**. She is very athletic, but has never really played outfield before. She reminds me of Sharonda McDonald who used to play for us. Sharonda had never really played outfield either, so we just put her out there and said, 'Run!' Kelsea is still learning the nuances of playing outfield, but she has great speed and is very aggressive. She's not afraid to dive for a ball and plays the game with a lot of heart. She is a left-handed slap-hitter like Sharonda was. We know she will make some mistakes as she gets comfortable and continues to develop. Offensively, if she catches on quickly, we'd love to have her in the leadoff spot. We're counting on Arbino to be in our starting rotation on the mound. She is a 6-foot, right-handed pitcher out of Clovis, California. Becca is very competitive and



wants to be in the lineup exactly what you want for a pitcher. She is strictly a pitcher, so she won't bat for us. **Taryn Broussard** will play first base for us when Rh is on the mound. She has potential to be a very good hitter. **Edén Morris** is our other freshman and she is more of a utility player. She will probably see less playing time this year because she is behind Glasco and our middle infielders, who are all very strong.

Whenever you sign a Broussard, do you recruit half the town of Lake Jackson? There are a lot of Broussards down there.

Yeah, her dad is a really planning tailgates. I can imagine how crazy it's going to get in the Reed parking lot. It will probably smell like crawfish étouffette and beer out there. It will be great fun.

There are some obvious similarities between your program and the soccer program going into this season. Can you use their success on the field to help motivate your team?

Depending on how things play out for us, we can certainly use them as an example. They took some knocks early losing some games that they don't typically lose. But they are so young and lost a great senior class like we did. The enthusiasm and eagerness of those young players really showed that they wanted to prove that they belong. It was fun to watch them progress throughout the season and they came so close to making it to the Final Four. It's a great example for our young players that anything is possible. We have talent just like they have talent, but confidence is everything. It's important for our players to play off the confidence they gain in practice and games. You have to have a little bit of a swagger and you could see that develop on the soccer team as the season progressed.

What does it mean to have Amanda Scarborough back this season as your pitching coach?

Amanda is doing a fantastic job. She gives the pitchers a lot of confidence and reassurance. She is very good with the technical side of pitching and the mechanics, which is really helpful for the young pitchers. And she's been through the trenches and can share with them her wealth of experience from the past four years. Amanda is the ultimate team player and makes our program better. We want to hang on to her as long as we can.

The team has a big non-conference series against perennial powerhouse Arizona at home. What kind of implications can that series have on the season?

First of all, I think it's a great opportunity because we have never played them on our campus. When we played them in Arizona, they won two of three, but for us to get a win at their place was pretty significant. They don't have a real dominant pitcher either, so it should be an interesting series. If we can take some wins from them, it will be a huge confidence builder for the rest of the season. It would also help when it comes time for post-season tournament selections. It's going to be a great series, and if our kids can relish the situation and not be intimidated, it will give us a big boost.

You also have a game against Sam Houston on April 22 that will have a different kind of impact. What can you tell us about it?

It's called "Swing for Life." A friend of mine who grew up playing baseball with was diagnosed with breast cancer a few years ago. She fought through it and then started this campaign to increase awareness in the fight against breast cancer. Adidas is making some pink jerseys for us and we want it to be a fun event for the community and bring awareness for a worthy cause. Some of the bigger programs in the country are taking part in it and we want to be the team that does the best job with the event. **BY**

"It's tempting to say we have the perfect formula to play for a national championship and just to follow everything we did last year, except now we have a completely different team."

—COACH JO EVANS



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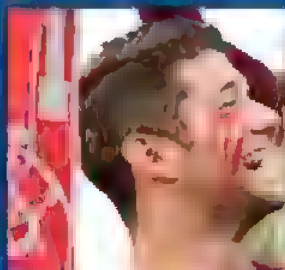
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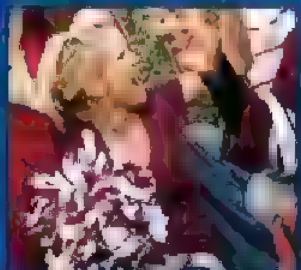
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the unexpected discovery of an **AGGIE SPORTS FAN**

BY KATE MCCONNELL '09

I never thought I'd be into this. I never thought I'd care whether a team won or lost or how the game was played. But, as much as it is a shock to me, there is no denying it.

I grew up with a deep phobia of gym class, and could typically be found glued to the wall, trying desperately to be invisible. I was the kid that looked forward to being the first one out in dodgeball.

I wasn't a sports fanatic. That is until I met my then-future-husband, who happens to be deeply rooted in Aggie sports. I started attending games in an attempt to impress him and had no intention other than that. I couldn't understand how he or the other Aggie fans he surrounded himself with could be so animated over a call a ref made or didn't make. I learned very quickly that if a game didn't end well, I wasn't to talk to him for the rest of the day—especially about the game.

It wasn't long, however, until I was bitten by the Aggie spirit; it alone fueled me through a game. I began attending games regularly and, don't tell, but I began to look forward to them too. I loved watching Aggie play and Megan pitch.

But I didn't like sports. No, not me. I'm not a sports fanatic.

Then, one day everything changed. My soon-to-be husband was off shooting pictures for some sports magazine he works for (Aggieland Illustrated) while the Aggie softball team played the last game in the NCAA championship. My plan was to watch the championship game so that I could keep my husband updated while he was gone.

I told myself I wasn't really interested in the game. I only understood bits and pieces as the girls played, but I knew that our girls were working hard and they desperately wanted to win. I could see it.

As the game proceeded, I realized I was scooting closer and closer to the edge of my seat. I found myself startled when I realized I was yelling at the TV screen alone in my living room.

Then it was over. We had lost. As the other team celebrated, the Aggie girls

stood in disbelief—crushed.

I may have been the kid that avoided gym class but I empathized greatly with the softball team, and their sensation of losing the thing they have lived most passionately for. For some of the girls, like Megan, this was their last game ever in an Aggie uniform. For others—it was their last game ever. Sure, it's "just a game," but this was a tragedy.


Then, it happened. That moment I had talked about. As I was recapping the last moments of the game to my husband, a lump formed in my throat.

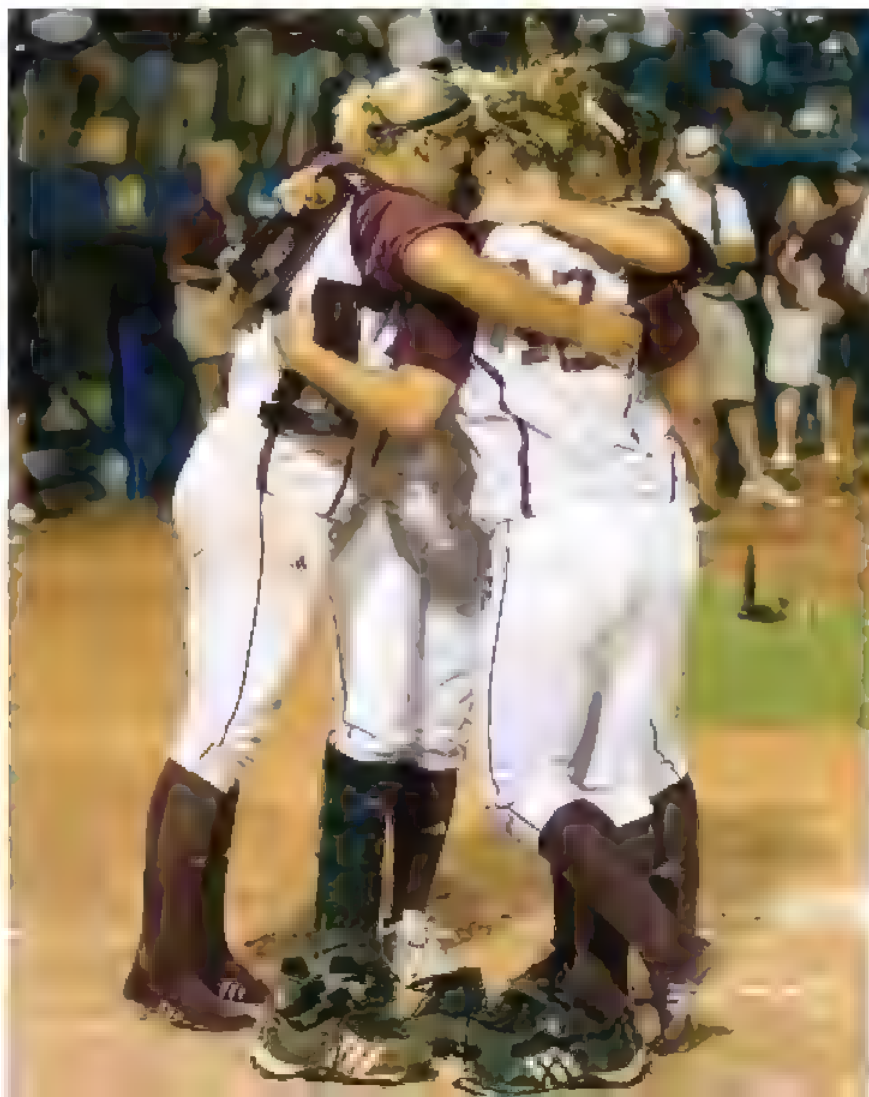
"It's not fair," I told him, "they've worked so hard."

"Are you crying?" he asked.

Of course not, I thought. It's a game. It's silly to cry over a game. But, the truth is, I was crying. Megan and the girls changed it from just a game to a way of life for me. I may never enjoy a game of dodgeball as much as the next kid, but I enjoy Aggie sports. I may not be a sports fanatic but, I love yelling for the Aggies—they are "my team."

Even though last season ended sadly, now I have a new season to look forward to. New players, new pitches, new reasons to love the game.

I never thought I'd be into this. But I am so glad that I am. 



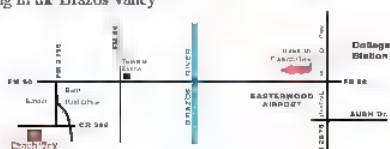


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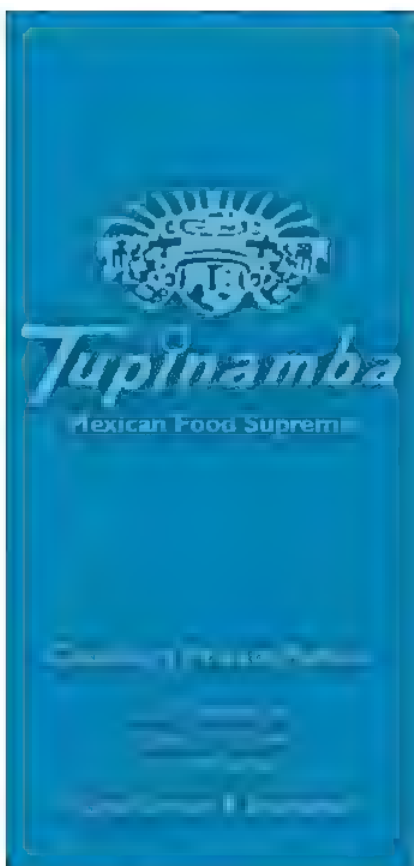
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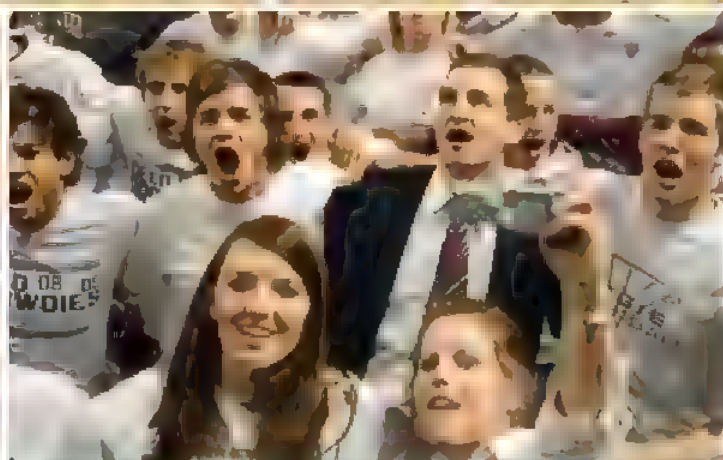
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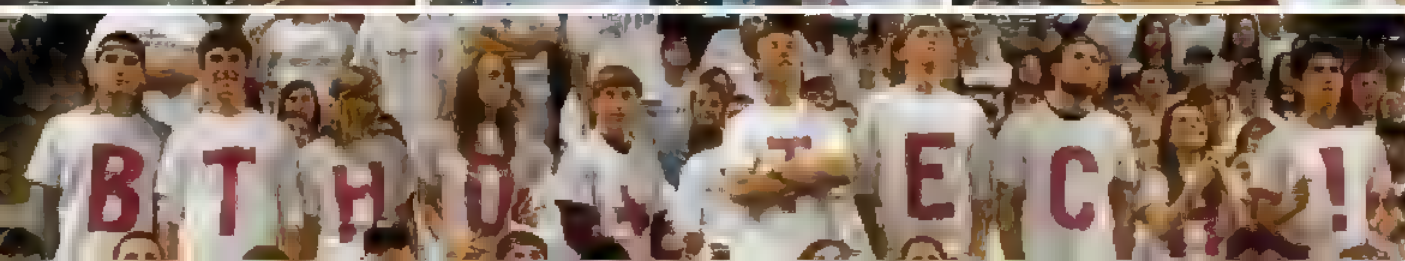
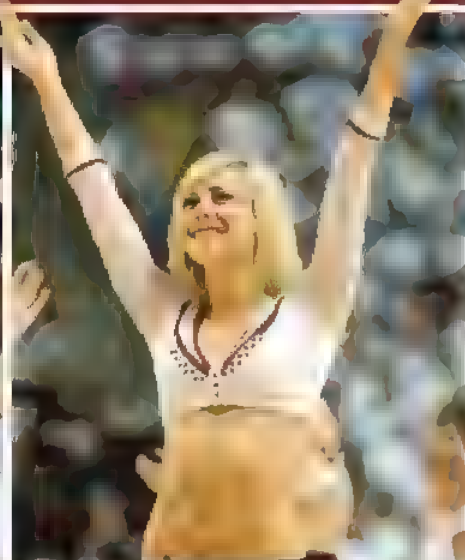
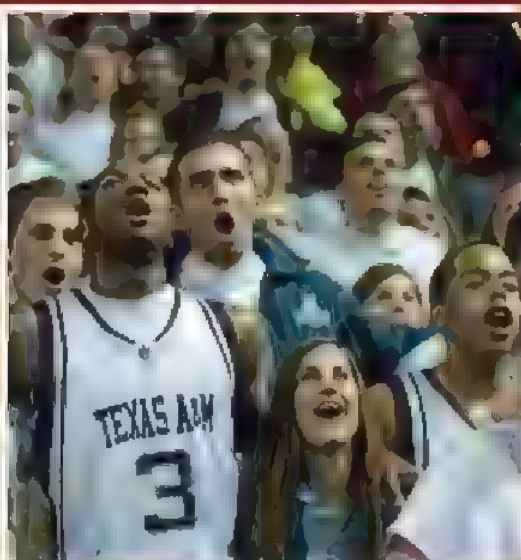
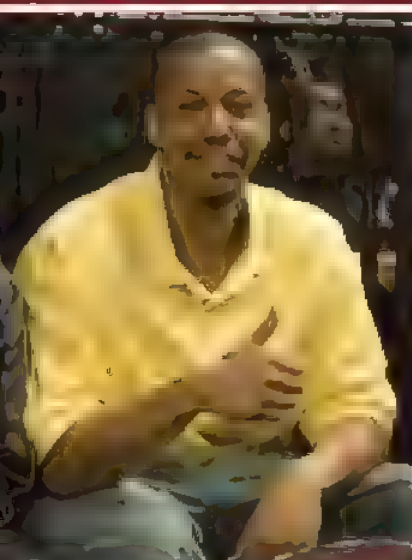
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the 12th man



(top left) The Texas Aggie Dance Team entertains the crowd during halftime of the men's game against Oklahoma. (top right) Members of the Dance Team and the 12th Man hold their hands up high while an Aggie attempts a free throw. (above) Students saw varsity's horns off before the Texas Tech game (left), and with Coach Turgeon after beating Baylor (right). (below left) All-time leading scorer Bernard King made a return visit to Aggieland in January and watched the Ags battle Oklahoma. (middle) Derrick Roland and B.J. Holmes join students for the War Hymn. (right) Dance Team member Monica Laughtlin energizes the Aggie crowd. (bottom) Aggie fans show how much they want to BTHO TECH!





ICE HOCKEY IN AGGIELAND

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01

"Building Champions" is the slogan that the Texas A&M athletic department uses to define the philosophy of the NCAA sports on campus. But one group of students outside the scope of the NCAA is also taking that to heart.

Since 2001, the Texas A&M ice hockey team has been a recognized club sport under the umbrella of Recreational Sports. While they lack the visibility and monetary support that the NCAA brings, they are having a record-setting year, leading all the other teams in the state and ranked in the top 10 in their division.

The Aggie hockey team was originally formed in 1982 when a group of students got together to play the game for fun. But hockey was not a popular sport in the state at that time, and once those founding students graduated, the team dissolved. However, the popularity of the sport started to increase in Texas when the Minnesota North Stars moved to

Dallas in 1993, becoming the state's first NHL franchise. The following year, Texas' largest city contributed to the increase with the formation of the Houston Aeros NHL team.

A few years later, in 1997, a new group of students decided to resurrect the team with the intention of playing other university club teams. This group of students was very passionate and dedicated to the sport, driving from College Station to Austin or Houston for games and practices since there was not a local ice rink. That changed in 2005 when the city of College Station, along with private investors, developed the Arctic Wolf Ice Center giving the team a permanent home.

Today, the Aggies compete in the Western Region of the American Collegiate Hockey Association. The ACHA is comprised of over 375 men's and women's teams, separated in divisions based on skill level. The Aggies are in Divi-

sion II – the middle division in the men's league. Teams are ranked due to strength of schedule and quality of wins, much like the BCS.

Unlike NCAA sports which traditionally span about a semester, the hockey season runs a large portion of the year. Tryouts start the week after school starts with the first game being generally at the end of September or early October. Regional Playoffs start late February, with Nationals held in mid-March.

The current team consists of about 20 players – all with prior hockey experience. While a lot of club sports allow for any student and skill level to participate, the hockey team has a tough tryout process in which students who do not have junior or high-school playing experience do not generally join.

The team does have a few benefits to not being an NCAA sport. One is not having any recruiting guidelines. While they have not recruited players in the past, they are starting to passively recruit future players to A&M by sending out emails and contacting traveling teams throughout the state.

They are also given much more flexibility since they are a student-run organization. The Aggie players and students hold leadership positions that run the organization off the ice, including soliciting sponsorships, holding fund-raisers and league communication. On the ice, however, the team turns the reigns over to volunteer head coach Scott Ball. Coach Ball controls everything from playing lines to disciplinary actions.

Since the team is not funded by the NCAA or athletic department, the team is almost exclusively self funded by dues and donations. Each athlete pays about \$2,000 per year to play on the team to offset the costs of ice time, equipment, and officials. The largest team expense is travel. The Aggies schedule 30 or more games a year, along with a flying trip to give the team exposure to other universities outside of the region. This year, the





Top 5 Reasons to watch Aggie hockey by senior team captain Phil Lowery:

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2. **Fast & Physical** – Combines the hard hitting of football with the constant motion of basketball
3. **New Tradition** – And it's growing
4. **Only Sport Played on Ice**
5. **We Love to See Fans** – Loud fans help the team win

team traveled to California to face UC Long Beach and San Jose State University.

The Aggie hockey team does share one common theme with the NCAA teams on campus – the desire to win. And they are doing just that. They are undefeated against rival Texas in five games this year – twice in the fall, once over the holidays, and twice in the spring. The holiday game is known as the "Pride of Texas Cup" and was played at the American Airlines Center in Dallas – home of the Dallas Stars. The Aggies' 6-2 win gives them a 4-2 overall record in the Cup series.

The Aggies have a chance to finish the season 20-5-1 – the best in school history with a good possibility of playing in regional playoffs. If they do well, the next step is the National Championship – the same goal as the other athletes on campus who are "building champions."

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One in a Million

BY BRAN DAVIS '01

When Terrence Murphy was being recruited out of Chapel Hill High School in Tyler, Texas, he had 15 scholarship offers from Division I universities to play quarterback—the position he had played all of his life. Texas A&M was not one of those schools, however. Then-head coach R.C. Slocum and the Aggie coaching staff saw his potential as a wide receiver.

Murphy fell in love with the traditions and the coaching staff at A&M, and was intrigued by the emergence of star wide receiver Robert Ferguson. After witnessing the Aggies' near upset victory over eventual National Champion Oklahoma in 2000, Murphy knew this was the place that he wanted to be—even if it meant switching positions.

One of seven wide receivers in his signing class, people didn't expect much out of Murphy once he got on campus and “sort of blew him to the side.” Then, in his first game as an Aggie wide receiver, Murphy provided a glimpse of things to come as he caught the game-winning touchdown.

Despite playing through some disappointing seasons and going through a coaching change midway through his college career, “T-Murph” rewrote the Texas A&M receiving record book and twice was selected to the All Big 12 1st Team as a receiver and kick returner.

“Some people say I was a legend,” Murphy adds. “Some people say I was good. Hard work and faith in God led to the success that I have had.”

NFL BOUND

Murphy's stellar career in Aggieland led to him being selected by the Green Bay Packers in the 2nd round in the 2005 NFL Draft by then-head coach Mike Sherman.

“When I got there, I quickly realized the NFL was not what I thought it was,” Murphy admits. “Not always in a bad way necessarily—it's just a business. And I don't really get star-struck, but I still remember the first time I saw Brett Favre. His hands and head were a lot bigger than I thought they were. His hands were huge!”

After being slowed by injuries throughout training camp and the preseason, Murphy finally got a chance to shine and did not



disappoint. The rookie caught five passes for 36 yards and returned five kickoffs for 91 yards in Weeks 2–4. He was also making great strides in practice. And suddenly, everything changed.

In the second quarter of the Week 4 game against Carolina, the Panthers' Thomas Davis tackled Murphy during a kickoff return. Murphy was hurt and medical staffers had to wheel him off the field on a stretcher. The injury was later diagnosed as spinal stenosis and it eventually forced him to retire from football.

“God had a different plan for me,” Murphy said.

COMING HOME

After working briefly as an assistant coach for Green Bay and a junior college, Murphy had some decisions to make about his future. His fiancée had just graduated from the University of Texas and they got married. He had two NFL coaching offers to consider—Green Bay and Seattle. But there was a feeling that he could not ignore.

“My heart was telling me to move back to Aggieland,” he said. “I just had to convince my wife. Ultimately, I turned down those two NFL jobs and said, ‘God is calling me back to Bryan/College Station for a reason.’”

Back in Aggieland, Murphy found a desire to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. He started a real estate company investing in income producing properties, while also doing a lot of ministry work.

A NEW OPPORTUNITY

While looking for a franchise opportunity for his wife (then-fiancée), Murphy came across Play-N-Trade and was immediately impressed by what the company had to offer.

“As a football player at A&M, when we weren't on the football field, we were either lifting weights, watching film, studying or eating,” he recalled. “If we weren't doing one of those things, we were playing video games.”

But Murphy and other athletes often found themselves disappointed with what the local gaming stores had to offer. And they rarely found themselves impressed with the customer service. Murphy saw Play-N-Trade as a perfect opportunity to provide the Bryan/College Station community with something it has never had before—a new age gaming store.



With the help of former Aggie teammate Quinlin Germany, Murphy opened the area's first Play-N-Trade in January in the newly constructed Bryan Towne Center. He plans to open two more stores in College Station in the near future.

Like many of the other gaming stores in the area, Play-N-Trade buys, sells and trades video games. The personable customer service and plentiful customer benefits are what makes the company unique. Using one of the store's eight 32-inch plasma TVs or the 52-inch in the back, customers can try any game out before they buy it.

"Nowhere else can you walk in and say, 'let me try out this brand new game that just came out this morning,'" Murphy says.

Play-N-Trade also offers retro games, a disk renewal program, VIP birthday parties and in-store tournaments. Murphy has plans to start lock-ins later this Spring.

"On a Wednesday or Friday night, parents will be able to sign in their kids and leave them at the store," he explains. "We will lock the doors at 9 p.m. and nobody can come in or go out after that. We will eat pizza, hang out and provide a safe haven for the kids to play. At the end, we will witness to them and motivate them to do the right things, stay off drugs and give their life to Christ."

A MILLION IDEAS

Murphy jokes that he has "a million ideas." He is co-writing a book with Rusty Burson that is coming out soon. He wants to start a Bryan/College Station Corvette Club to raise money for charity. He wants to help current Aggie athletes meet local business leaders and learn about the opportunities they could pursue after college. All while continuing his ministry work and sharing his testimony. He also wants to get back into coaching someday – sort of.

"My goal one day is to coach my kids," he admits. "I don't have any yet, but we're planning on it, God willing."

And one day down the road, Murphy would like to work for Texas A&M in some fashion.

"I'd like to work for the 12th Man Foundation or Texas A&M Foundation once I get the entrepreneurial stuff out of my system," he said. "Slow down, have kids and work for A&M." ■

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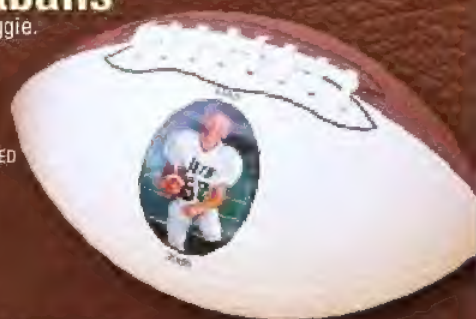
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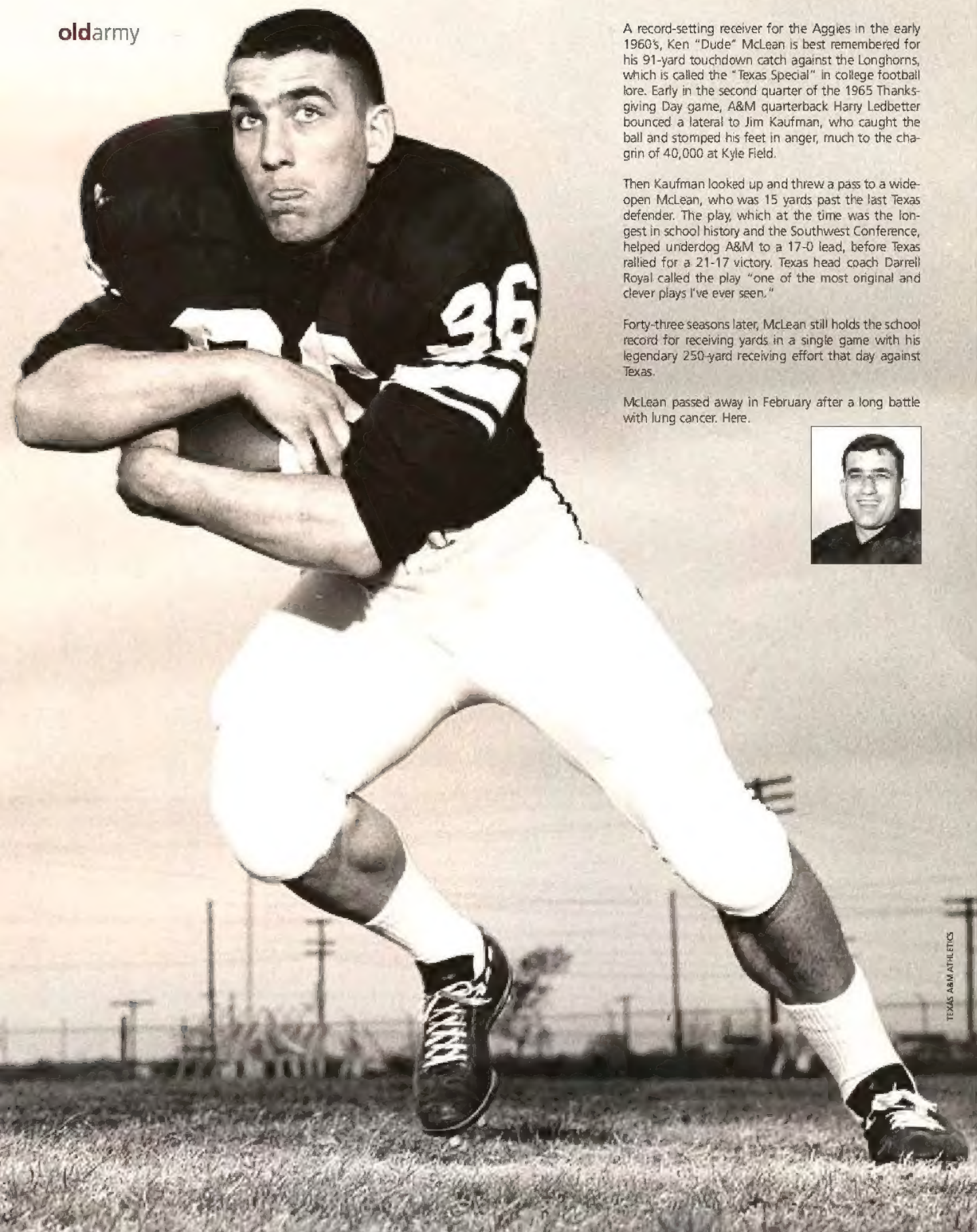
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Answers to All Trivia Challenge from pg. 18: 1(d), 2(c), 3(b), 4(a)

oldarmy



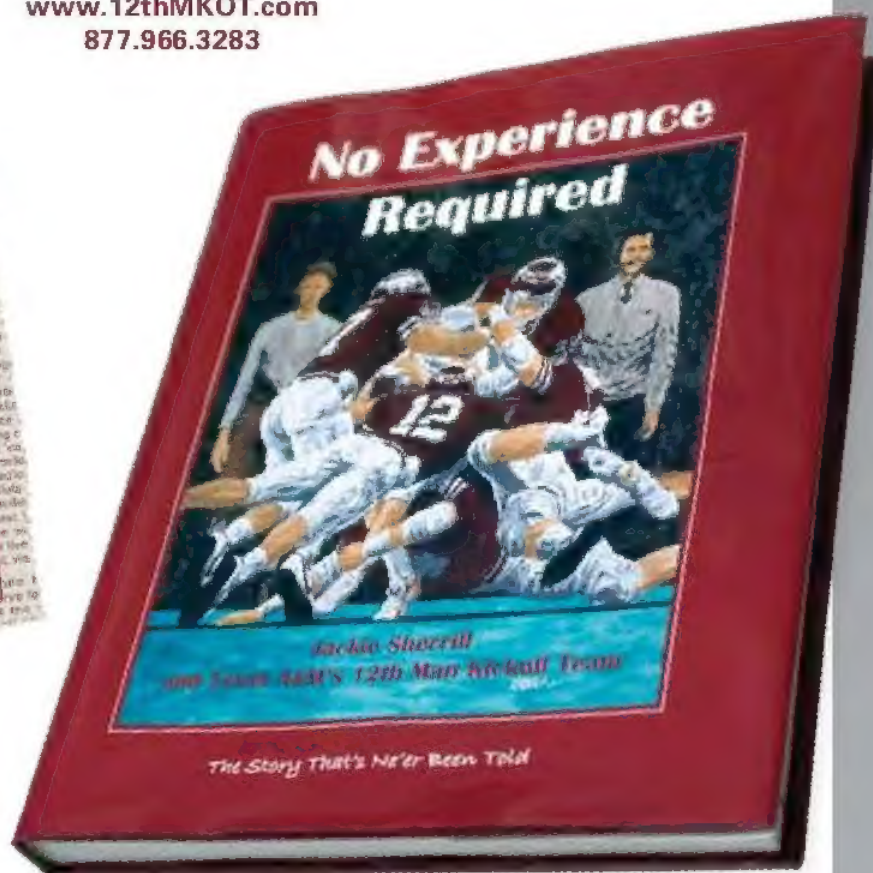
A record-setting receiver for the Aggies in the early 1960's, Ken "Dude" McLean is best remembered for his 91-yard touchdown catch against the Longhorns, which is called the "Texas Special" in college football lore. Early in the second quarter of the 1965 Thanksgiving Day game, A&M quarterback Harry Ledbetter bounced a lateral to Jim Kaufman, who caught the ball and stomped his feet in anger, much to the chagrin of 40,000 at Kyle Field.

Then Kaufman looked up and threw a pass to a wide-open McLean, who was 15 yards past the last Texas defender. The play, which at the time was the longest in school history and the Southwest Conference, helped underdog A&M to a 17-0 lead, before Texas rallied for a 21-17 victory. Texas head coach Darrell Royal called the play "one of the most original and clever plays I've ever seen."

Forty-three seasons later, McLean still holds the school record for receiving yards in a single game with his legendary 250-yard receiving effort that day against Texas.

McLean passed away in February after a long battle with lung cancer. Here.





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